

JOHN ELIOT AND THE MASSACHUSETT LANGUAGE

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I. Introduction.

John Eliot (1603-1690) was an important figure in the early history of New England for a number of reasons, including the importance of his extensive missionary work with the Massachusett and other local Amerindian tribes. He was also quite involved in the analysis of the Massachusett language. He translated various works into this Eastern Algonquian language, including the Bible and various religious materials. He wrote the first grammar of a non-European language published in English, his 1666 The Indian Grammar Begun, and a Primer and Logic Primer in Massachusett. This material remains our primary source for Massachusett, as well as perhaps our richest source on early contact languages available.

II. Eliot's life and work.

John Eliot arrived in Massachusetts on November 2, 1631 and became quite active in the life of the colony, serving as the minister to the first church at Roxbury, establishing a school, being involved in various events of the period, such as the Anne Hutchinson trial and the writing of the Bay Psalm Book. By the late 1630s various factors persuaded Eliot that he should start to evangelize the Indians. The two most important reasons later given by Eliot were the Seal of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay - showing an Indian saying "come over and help us", which Eliot referred to as "the public engagement", and his own "pity for the poor Indian" (quoted in Winslow 1968:72)

Therefore he began to study the Massachusett language in order to be able to preach to the Indians in their own language. His method for learning Massachusett was to discover "a pregnant witted young man, who had been a servant in an English house [apparently named Cocknoe], who pretty well understood his own Language, and hath a clear pronunciation: Him I made my interpreter ... I diligently marked the difference of their Grammar from ours: When I found the

way of them I would pursue a word, a noun, a verb, through all of the variations I could think of. And thus I came at it" (1666: 66). He used the help of this interpreter to translate several texts, such as the Lord's prayer, but he did not want to preach to the Indians through an interpreter, preferring to wait until his proficiency in the language allowed him to preach.

In 1646 his command of Massachusetts was such that he began to preach to the Indians, beginning at the Wigwam of a leader named Waban. From this point on he began to devote an increasing amount of time to ministering to the Indians, spending many days every week with them, and riding out into the Indian towns until 1685 when, at the age of 81, he was physically no longer able to. By 1650 he formed Natick, the first of what were termed the "Praying Indian towns". The idea behind these towns was for the Christian Indians to establish permanent communities, separate from the non-Christian Indians, and distant enough from the white colonists to ensure peace. Here the Indians would start their own churches, led not by white ministers but Indian ones (though under the oversight of Eliot). It seems that Eliot was thus trying to find a middle ground for the Indians to live in, separate from their former lifestyles, yet not totally forced to assimilate to white culture. Eventually, by 1675, there were fourteen of these towns in all, each with its own separate church and school. It has been estimated that at this time 20% of the Indian population of New England had been converted, with the Massachusetts and the Indians on Martha's Vineyard being perhaps largely converted. In 1649 the first Protestant missionary society, "the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel unto Indians in New England" was formed in England, for the purpose of aiding Eliot's work. Eliot wrote a fair number of tracts, describing his work, to help to raise money for the Corporation.

Eliot's work among the Indians was in many ways brought to a halt by King Philip's war, fought between hostile Indians and the New England colonists from 1675-1676. While he continued to work among the Indians during and after the war, the strength of his work was broken. Prior to the war he had been going out into new territory and starting new Praying Indian Towns, but no new ones were started after the war, and the great attrition in the numbers of Indians had an impact on the number of new converts. He spent a number of years

editing some of his earlier work and translating one new work.

III. Was this work prescientific?

The quality and value of the linguistic work that Eliot completed in his lifetime can best be addressed in terms of the general state and importance of linguistic studies in the early seventeenth century. A number of specific questions and common perceptions of the work of this era (both the work of missionary linguists and scholars in Europe) need to be assessed. The first perception of this work is that it is strictly amateurish and in some way not really scientific in any sense of the word, in fact quite often without any value whatsoever.

The standard picture that has been presented of the early linguistic work done in the Amerindian languages of North, Central, and South America presents a rather bleak picture. Almost all of this work was carried out by Christian missionaries: Spanish priests in Mexico and elsewhere, French priests in Canada, and English ministers in New England. As indeed with most pre-nineteenth century linguistic work, the work of these missionary linguists has been viewed as not merely unrefined but misguided. These linguists have largely been accused of a sort of "square peg in the round hole" approach to the languages that they examined, i.e. that they so distorted these languages to fit the standard pattern of Latin that their analyses are quite without value. The distortion has been blamed on the training of these linguists as well as on a general insensitivity to the languages and cultures of these native peoples whom they were interested in only for the sake of religious conversion and whose languages they were only trying to analyze for the sake of translating religious works and training other missionaries.

Leonard Bloomfield is quite harsh in his judgement of this early work in his discussion of the history of linguistics in Language:

"The era of exploration brought a superficial knowledge of many languages. Travelers brought back vocabularies, and missionaries translated religious books into the tongues of newly-discovered countries. Some even compiled grammars and dictionaries of exotic languages. Spanish

priests began this work as early as in the sixteenth century; to them we owe a number of treatises on American and Philippine languages. These works can only be used with caution, for the authors, untrained in the recognition of foreign speech-sounds, could make no accurate record, and, knowing only the terminology of Latin grammar, distorted their exposition by fitting it into this frame. Down to our own time, persons without linguistic training have produced work of this sort; aside from the waste of labor, much information has in this way been lost." (1933: 7).

Holger Pedersen is no less critical when he discusses the general pattern of linguistic work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While viewing the (European comparative) work of Joseph Justus Scaliger as some of the best work of this period, he still strongly criticizes this work: "...he adduced hardly any linguistic material to support the correctness of his divisions, and he included only those languages whose interrelationships must force themselves upon any investigator. Where research was necessary to discover a relationship, he missed the relationship. ... Thus he did not advance beyond the ancients' unhistorical conception of language" (1962: 6). He further states that: "Scaliger's attitude is typical of the whole period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some observers made discoveries ... but they did not know how to draw the correct conclusions from them" (1962: 6-7). He further describes the general work in comparative linguistics that was done at the time in the most pejorative of terms:

"The method followed was still approximately that which had been inherited from the ancients, though it was applied to new material. Even the most incredible failure to differentiate between speaking and writing, ... can be paralleled by citations from the ancients. ... A scholar selected some familiar language, explained it as the oldest on some basis which had nothing to do whatever with linguistic observation, and then sought to prove his assertion by means of all the wrong-headed methods which he had inherited" (1962: 8).

These views are perhaps good examples of what E.F.K. Koerner (1974: 3) (and others, notably Butterfield 1931) have called propagandistic, or "Whig" histories, that is histories which are written with the

goal not of presenting the past in its own terms, but of presenting the past as a way of grinding some particular current axes, or extolling the glorious accomplishments of some (the writer's own) particular school of linguistics (the Neo-Grammarians school in the case of Pedersen). This characterization of the linguistic work of the early period often goes along with the contention that linguistics as a real science began in 1786 with Sir William Jones (see Hockett 1965), or in 1816, with the publishing of Bopp's Conjunctionsystem, and that all of the linguistic work preceding these works was prescientific, hence on a par with alchemy, or so completely idiosyncratic as to be worthless.

While not all linguistic historiographers have held a negative view of sixteenth and seventeenth century linguistic work, it is without a doubt that in general this picture of the linguistic work of this era has dominated. Even some researchers who are more familiar with and favorably inclined to the work of these linguists have agreed to some degree with this generally negative assessment.

IV. A proposed reanalysis of the work of this era.

It is the contention of this author that the work of Eliot does not conform to the generally accepted picture of sixteenth and seventeenth century linguistic work in many ways, and that this shows either that this general picture is wrong, or at least that there has been an overemphasis on the Latinizing tendencies.

The work of Eliot was of extreme importance in that it represented a quality and quantity of linguistic research and material on the Amerindians and their languages that was quite unusual for its time. The importance of work in non-European languages in the development of the science of linguistics in Europe must be strongly emphasized. As R.H. Robins says; "Colonization of the New World and voyages of discovery ... and the dispatch of missionaries all played their part in awakening scholars to the hitherto undreamed wealth of linguistic diversity in the world" (1979: 103).

In areas other than the New World it has become clearer in recent years that there was a lot of important linguistic work carried out prior to the nineteenth century. George Metcalf (1974) and others

have pointed out, for example, the extent to which the Indo-European hypothesis was postulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by scholars such as Andreas Jaeger, Georg Stiernhielm, Joseph Justus Scaliger (notwithstanding the earlier remarked on criticisms of Scaliger by Pedersen), and many others. Likewise in recent years the Universal Grammar of Port Royal, as well as those of their forerunners and followers, have been "rediscovered" and re-evaluated and are now held in esteem.

We need to view the work of linguists of this era in its own terms, understanding the world view that these authors held and not attempting to see it as sharing the same basic assumptions that we share, and also not viewing it from a current strongly theoretical perspective. This work should also be viewed in terms of its utility to present researchers, especially in cases where the languages described by earlier researchers have either disappeared or greatly changed.

It seems clear that this early work needs to be much more carefully scrutinized than it has been, and that there is much of value that can be gleaned from these works (and indeed much is being gleaned from these sorts of works, see I. Goddard 1981 b and Bragdon 1978 and 1981 for an example of how early probate court records are being used).

V. Eliot's analysis of Massachusetts phonology.

As Miner (1974) and I. Goddard (1981 a) have discussed Eliot's analysis of phonology in some detail, the primary focus of this paper will be on Eliot's analysis of Massachusetts morphology, and in particular the verbal morphology. Though the phonology will be briefly discussed.

What was his approach to the phonology of Massachusetts, and how can we reconstruct his method of analysis? It seems clear that he approached the language with a relatively open mind, not forcing the phonology of Massachusetts into an English mold, though in terms of segmental phonology, it appears that Massachusetts was not greatly different from English.

His approach is focused primarily on the phonemic level, which he feels is the foundation for the study of the language. His concern was to describe the consonants and vowels that occurred in Massachusetts,

and he does not discuss much phonetic detail, save using English words to illustrate the sounds he is discussing. He also does not discuss phonemic variation, except as it was related to some cases of morphophonemic variation. He does recognize the drawbacks of the English graphic code, and so uses new names for sounds and isolates the exact sound that he wants each of his Massachusetts characters to represent. He thus shows an awareness of the distinctive sound units of language, if not for their variation, and for the need to describe the general character of these sounds. This was the apparent first step of his analysis - to isolate the "letters" of Massachusetts.

He does show some appreciation for suprasegmentals, though he does not seem to clearly distinguish between vowel length and stress, which according to Miner (1974: 174) was not clear to scholars of language in England until John Foster's essay on stress versus length in the eighteenth century. His treatment of nasalization as an accent is odd (though defensible), since he says that it only occurs with two particular vowels (/a/ and /o/). It seems odd that this only occurred with these two, but according to some Algonquianists, Massachusetts and the Eastern Algonquian languages were in the midst of a process of nasalization at the time of Eliot.

As far as phonotactics is concerned, it is clear that Eliot was aware of the importance of phonotactics, which he viewed as syllable structure, but he did not feel that the syllable structure of Massachusetts was in any way different from that of English. In his interest in syllable structure Eliot seems to have been ahead of his time. It is important to note that in this and other areas of analysis Eliot refers to Massachusetts as being one of the "learned" languages and does not treat it as a "primitive" language. This respect for Massachusetts is shown throughout his Grammar.

VI. Eliot's analysis of Massachusetts morphology.

It is clear that Eliot viewed morphology and syntax as two parts of a more general area. Though he did comment separately on word level morphology and the grammatical relations between words, as "the formation of words asunder, by themselves", and "the construction of them together, to make sense, or a sentence", he discussed them both within the general heading of the art of ordering words for speech. He also made comments

such as that Massachusetts Syntaxis delighted in a certain type of morphology (the five Verb concordances).

Clearly he was aware of the central role of morphology in Massachusetts, which would have been almost impossible to overlook. He certainly gave morphology the primary place in his Grammar. Likewise he was very aware of the great differences between Massachusetts morphology and the morphology of European languages, and he went to lengths to highlight both the general types and specific examples of these differences.

A real key into his method of analysis can be found in his discussion, in the concluding passage, of his method of learning Massachusetts. It seems that based on his knowledge of languages he had certain expectations of what would or would not be present in the grammar of Massachusetts. Like any field worker, he began by testing his expectations of the language with his native speaker informant. It is clear that he did not only check out these expectations, but once he was more fluent in the language, pursued morphological patterns that he became aware of, in order for him to have discovered the "new wayes of Grammar" which he alluded to. He does not seem to have been attempting to force Massachusetts into the mold of Latin or Greek or Hebrew.

What were the particular views on the structure of language, or expectations with which he approached Massachusetts? A number of these he presents in general discussions in his Grammar, in particular in his general discussion at the beginning of his section on morphology. Here he gives a definition of logic and rhetoric which follows the classical model, though it shows a strong Ramistic pattern. What we would perhaps call syntax is referred to as logic; "The laying of Sentences together to make up a Speech, is performed by Logick". "The adorning of that Speech with Eloquence, is performed by Rhetoric" (1666: 5). As mentioned, this seems to follow the Ramistic definition of rhetoric as proposed by Ramus's colleague Audomarus Talaeus (or Omer Talon) in his *Rhetorica*, which defines rhetoric as the art of speaking well. This definition is close to an Aristotelian one, but elsewhere there is evidence of a strong Ramistic influence. For example, Eliot's heavy reliance on a form of binary classification of features of grammar directly follows the pattern of Ramistic

work and was in real contrast to Aristotelian practices.

Eliot does seem to show a generally binary approach to grammar, at least at the higher levels. Just as he initially divided grammar into the art of making words and the art of ordering them for speech. He further divides his discussion of the art of ordering words for speech into the formation of words by themselves and the construction of them together. As mentioned above the construction of words together is performed by logic, as well as being described by the grammar.

In the formation of words by themselves Eliot again considers two things: the general qualifications of words, and the kinds of words. The qualification of words is divided into two also; where the words arise from (which is further divided into standard and derived forms, such as nominals, verbs made out of nouns), and how words occur, either in isolation or in longer compounds. He comments on the way in which compounds are so very common in Massachusetts, because of "the many Syllables which the Grammar Rule requires, and suppletive Syllables which are of no signification, and curious care of Euphonie" (1666: 6). Thus he finishes his discussion of the general pattern of the qualifications of words before discussing the types of words.

While clearly the division of all words into the parts of speech was viewed by Eliot as a given, he does seem to assume that these parts of speech can be divided into two subtypes, chief and attendant words, with again a binary division of each of those two subtypes. Chief words are subdivided into nouns and verbs. Attendant words are subdivided into those whose occurrence is tied to the occurrence of other words (adnouns and adverbs) and those which are of common use to both (pronouns and conjunctions). However, Eliot does not subclassify every word type, Interjections in Massachusetts belong to neither the chief nor attendant words, "but are of use in Speech, to express the passionate minde of man" (1666: 7). This seems to indicate the kind of openness to novel grammatical patterns which has already been mentioned.

The seemingly fundamental classification of words into the parts of speech seems to be very central to Eliot's analysis. This should not be surprising. It shows the extent to which Eliot was a part of the

classical tradition. R.H. Robins has documented the extent to which this basic pattern of analysis was followed from the early Greek grammarians, to the Latin grammarians down to the present, with very little variation. The parts of speech were clearly "the principal infrastructure of the classical tradition of grammar" (1966: 4), and were the starting focus for any grammatical work. Such a paradigm in the approach to grammar was clearly followed well into the 20th century. Given Eliot's training in the classical languages it should not be surprising that he followed this pattern, though, as noted above, he did not follow it slavishly. He did not assume that all of the parts of speech of Greek and Latin occurred in Massachusetts, but rather assumed that the first focus of a grammar should be to divide the words of the language into its parts of speech.

Starting from that focus he systematically described each of the seven parts of speech in Massachusetts in order. In this discussion he focusses on the morphological variations that occur to each of these classes, as well as the general types of words that occur. Often he comments on patterns that would be new to his readers.

He clearly had expectations in the morphology, based on European languages. Thus he was aware that there might be some sort of gender system of the nouns. Nominal morphology in Massachusetts seems to have generally followed the pattern that he expected with the notable exception of the way in which pronouns are affixed onto the verbs.

In verbal morphology Eliot seems to have also had expectations of what to expect in Massachusetts, and he was sometimes surprised to find new types of features or not to find features of the classical languages. Thus for example he expects a system of tense and modes for the verbs and does find what we might term the indicative, imperative and subjunctive modes, as well as the present and past tenses, but he also finds that there is what he terms the optative and the indefinite modes and that no other tenses occur (the future tense is expressed by adding one of two suffixes to the present indicative form). Eliot encounters a feature of Massachusetts which is different from Indo-European languages, the absence of a copula verb "to be". Some later analysts (for example Pickering 1822, and DuPonceau 1822) felt this was an oversight on Eliot's part, and that such a verb must occur, if only for the

translation of such a passage as Exodus 3.14, where God tells Moses that his name is "I am that I am". Eliot seems to have been quite correct in his analysis here, and in translating that sentence in *The Bible* he used a phrase which could be glossed "I exist I exist". Eliot's statement regarding the lack of a copula is that "We have no compleat distinct word for the Verb Substantive, as other Learned Languages, and our English Tongue have, but it is under a regular composition whereby many words are made a Verb Substantive" (1666: 15). The absence of the verb "to be" appears to be only mentioned by Eliot because Europeans would find it odd. Eliot discusses five concordances of the active verbs which seem to have been his own invention: they are a phenomenon that was new to Eliot, and this system seems to have been his own. He comments on some parts of Latin grammar that are absent from Massachusetts, and says that the language seems to have another way of expressing the ideas that are in Latin expressed by the gerundive and supine modes, but that he has not yet found its system. He only mentions the passive in his section of verb paradigms.

His division of the adverbs into eighteen classes seems so unwieldy that it appears to have been his own invention, rather than an exact pattern of analysis that he borrowed. Certainly this does not show a typical Ramistic pattern of binary divisions. Most adverbs seem to fall into the class of quality adverbs, or deal with time or place. He does here make his only specific reference to other theorists of language, his only "meta-linguistic" comment of the *Grammar*. He says that these adverbs are classified as "Learned Grammarians have gathered them together" (1666: 21), but the present research has found no direct source for Eliot's division of the Adverbs.

In order to exemplify the work of Eliot in morphology let us examine his discussion of the five concordances mentioned above and his discussion of Massachusetts verbal morphology.

He states that there are two "sorts or forms" of the active verb; the simple form and the suffixed form. The form depends on the nature of the nouns being discussed, the simple form occurring with inanimate nouns. When the noun is animate, or when both an animate and an inanimate are involved, one of five different suffix forms of the verb occurs. He terms these the "five Concordances of the Suffix form Active,

wherein the Verb doth receive a various formation", and also notes that his analysis is incomplete in this area: "I think there be some more, but I have beat out no more" (1666: 17). He explains his choice of terminology by saying that "the chief weight and strength of the Syntaxis of this Language, lyeth in this eminent manner of formation of Nouns and Verbs, with the Pronoun persons" (1666: 17). Note that he terms this morphological pattern Syntaxis, and uses the term Concordances to show the syntactic importance of these alternations, also that many of these constructions would in English be shown by Prepositional constructions.

The Five concordances are as follows:

1. When the object of the act is an animate noun, called "The Suffix animate object". An example is "K^wadchansh, I keep thee".
2. When "animates are each others object", called "The Suffix animate mutual". An example is "N^wadchanittimun, We keep each other". This form "ever wanteth the singular number".
3. When an inanimate object is effected for an animate noun, called "The Suffix animate end". An example is "K^wadchanumoush, I keep it for thee; or, for thy use".
4. When an animate is jointly effected, called "The Suffix animate form social". An example is "K^wweechewadchanumwomsh, I keep it with thee".
5. When one party acts in the place of another, called "The Suffix form advocate, or in stead form". An example is "K^wadchanumwanshun, I keep it for thee; I act in thy stead". He gives further examples of this form which he says has a great religious importance in such phrases as He died for me, you, etc. (1666: 17-18).

The very last, long section of the Grammar is reserved for the verb paradigms of Massachusetts. Eliot systematically and completely presents the paradigm for two verbs only, N^wadchanumun - "I keep it" (Be it tool or garment) an Active verb with an Inanimate object, and N^waantam - "I am wise" a Verb Substantive. These two verbs he presents for all six person-number combinations, in both tenses and in all five modes. When illustrating the five concordances of the active suffixed form Eliot uses the English word

Pay instead of the Massachusett word for Be wise, "so that any may distinguish betwixt what is Grammar, and what belongs to the word" and also to illustrate that "In this remarkable way of speech, the Efficient of the Act, and the Object, and sometimes the End, also, are in a regular composition comprehended in the Verb: and there is no more difficulty in it, when use hath brought our Notion to it, than there is in any other Languages, if so much" (1666: 28).

Eliot comments in almost a playful doublet on the length of the forms of verbs in the Optative mode: "It seems their desires are slow, but strong; Because they be utter'd double breath't, and long" (1666: 25). Later he omits the optative mode forms for the negative simple form because it is difficult and seldom used.

Periodically, in the paradigms, he will comment on the specific morphology of a mode or construction, but much of the time he only presents the form. For example he points out that the Imperative mode of the first concordance Affirmative "doth cast off the Affix, or prefixed pronoun, using only the suffixed Grammaticall variations" (1666: 32). Another example is when he points out that the optative mode of the first concordance affix is the form for "I wish it were" in isolation.

Having given the paradigms for all of the negative and affirmative forms of the verb he makes an interesting comment on the weakness of his analysis of the causative forms, which he briefly presents next. He observes that this form "is not universally applicable to this Verb; neither have I yet fully beat it out: onely in some chief wayes of the use of it in Speech I shall set down, leaving the rest for afterwards, if God will, and that I live to adde unto this beginning" (1666: 59).

Having finished that brief paradigm he states that though he had planned to stop his paradigms at this point he feels compelled to give a paradigm for passive forms. Because "considering that all Languages (so farre as I know) and this also, do make use of the Verb Substantive [sic] Passive, and in the reason of Speech it is of frequent use: Considering also that it doth differ in its formation from other Verbs, and that Verbals are often derived out of this form ... I have therefore here put down an example thereof" (1666: 60). He then gives a four page paradigm of "I am kept", etc. We can compare *k^wadchansh* - "I keep thee" (*k^w* - 2nd

person singular object marker, *wadchan* - "keep") and *nəwadchan* - "I keep him" (*nə* -1st person singular subject marker), the indicative present tense forms of the verb "keep" with *nəwadchanit* - "I am kept" and *kəwadchanit* - "thou art kept". Note that both the passive suffix *it* is added, and that the pronouns are differently used.

The final section of his paradigms is a two-page summary of all of the suffixes used in the verbal morphology, with a listing of exactly where they are used. For example in the Imperative mode with a 1st person singular subject: *unon* marks a 2nd person singular object, *on* marks a 3rd person singular object, *uneau* marks a 2nd person plural object, and *oneau* marks a 3rd person plural object.

VII. Conclusion. The general value of Eliot's work.

When seen in its context, the work of Eliot was in some ways advanced for his day, but in many ways was representative of other work of that period. It shows a primarily practical interest in the Massachusetts language, which grew out of his very real interest in the Massachusetts themselves. Perhaps because it came out of Eliot's own lengthy personal contact with the tribe, a respect for the Massachusetts and their language is evident in this work. This respect manifests itself primarily in his desire to describe the language as it was, and to describe it as a "learned language". In general, elements of Eliot's training and background do seem to have well qualified him for this task, especially his exposure to Ramus as well as Aristotle, and an extensive background and interest in the classical languages and Hebrew. Due to their extensive study of Greek and Hebrew as well as Latin the English Puritans of this period seem to have been better equipped for this sort of task in general than the Jesuit and other Roman Catholic missionaries. This is a fact that has never before been clearly brought out.

Eliot's analysis of Massachusetts seems to be relatively free of Latin-based preconceptions which could have clouded and warped his work. His work was incomplete, yet still represents an excellent beginning, in particular in the areas where his training was strongest; phonology and morphology. Happily these are two of the most important areas of Massachusetts. The morphology of Massachusetts was

particularly novel to Europeans, yet was well analyzed by Eliot. In general, his analysis has held its value quite well (how many other 17th century works are so frequently cited in this century?). This is due in part to the fact that he documented in great depth a now-dead language from an almost-dead branch of a major Amerindian language family. But Eliot is well regarded by current Algonquianists, and his work seems to be quite remarkable according to our general evaluation of the linguistic work of his century, and the work of "missionary linguists" especially.

The fact that Eliot's work seems so remarkable has led us to investigate the general pattern of work in Eliot's time. From this it seems clear that Eliot was in some ways unique, but was also part of the more general pattern of linguistic analysis in his time. Clearly, our evaluation of this period needs adjustment, and this is a first step in providing such an adjustment. This was an era of tremendous scientific growth and innovation. Later generations of scholars of language have written the history of that work in linguistics which preceeded them and have frequently denigrated its value. Enlightenment figures such as Voltaire described the seventeenth century in very negative terms, primarily to aggrandize their own work (see Becker 1932). Nineteenth century scholars felt that all work before their time was of little or no value. All of this has meant a general lack of appreciation for the work of earlier scholars. The seventeenth century has suffered particularly from this sort of reappraisal. Another result of this sort of "whig history" is the myth of "the great leap forward". By this I mean that when analyzing the work of past linguists, linguistic analysis which preceded them and which had a significant influence on those later scholars has been ignored, and the work of these later scholars (perhaps the heroes of those historians involved in such a history) is seen as emerging from thin air. This is not to say that we wish to claim that linguistic work can be seen as the step-by-step discovery of "truth". Climates of opinion, cynosures, and paradigms have changed. However, work did not occur in isolation, and we need to examine questions of influence carefully.

Seeing Eliot's work in this perspective, it seems clearly of value to us. Not only for what it can tell us about the Massachusetts language, and Eliot, but especially for what it can tell us about the linguistic work of that whole period, if not all work from eras

other than our own. It is hoped that this brief exposition of Eliot and his work has served that purpose. More work in this general area can, and should be done.

Having established the importance of Eliot and his work, and the extent to which our understanding of the linguistic work of his era has been incorrect, it should be clear that we need to develop an accurate picture of that era's linguistic analysis. This can and should serve to strengthen an interest in the investigation of earlier linguistic work which we have previously ignored.

In particular, a case can be made on the basis of this that early analyses of Amerindian and other languages which have been ignored by current scholars on the grounds of their being "pre-scientific" need to be reexamined. There is a wealth of data on languages dead, and living but considerably altered by the passage of time and proximity to European languages, that has been ignored but which can be of great use to modern researchers. In this era in which many Amerindian languages are left with only a few elderly native speakers, linguists can no longer afford to ignore the older materials available. To make a reasonable analogy it is worth noting that Indo-European scholars have done a reasonable job of interpreting early records from now dead languages. A more philological approach to the study of Amerindian languages can be undertaken, and in fact needs to be. This is further evidence supporting such an approach, and asserting its viability.

In order to fully apprehend these early works an in-depth analysis of their linguistics, the methods of analysis which they used, their educational background and the influences of other linguistic work on theirs. Only this very comprehensive of an examination will allow our conclusions on this early work to be sound. This in turn will create a basis on which reasonable judgements about other work of this era can be made.

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